My Open Letter to Help: Let's Change the World.

Hello. This is my "Open Letter" that I'm specifically writing to people and organizations that are capable of affecting positive change. I seek collaboration, community support, funding, expert resources, and a work opportunity. I've lived in San Francisco, New York, San Diego, Sarasota (Florida); and currently reside in Fresno, CA. I'm ready to move anywhere, do anything, contribute however I can- in any capacity. I sincerely hope some of you will read this and be compelled to contact me.

I want to help change the world. I know I cannot do it alone.

Our world faces many challenges. Society is more insular due to factors like internet, HDTV, game consoles, cell phones, social media, and a lack of community engagement. Our workforce is weakened by continued offshore manufacturing and outsourcing. Many regions face a lack of advanced educational attainment. Social strife proliferates across our nation. The division between our richest and poorest keeps growing. Our infrastructure is failing, largely based on old technology and lesser demands. We have an aging population growing faster than ever. Our business culture expects immediate gains, we rarely prioritize future concerns or long-term solutions over instant profit. Climate change is a threat that needs to be addressed faster, much faster. Our appointed leaders are not personally invested enough in social justice and the environmental issues we face.

Let's start with the goals, the ambitions, *the solutions*; the fundamental principles of the end-point. We must recognize the many systemic flaws in our current way of life. Change is not easy. Change involves risk. By definition, change goes against all that we are familiar with; those things already in place, oftentimes deemed successful. "Creative thinking challenges the status quo. The status quo and creativity are incompatible," wrote John C. Maxwell, in his book *How Successful People Think.* I'll draw upon expert experience, resources, and references; so I hope I am not merely dismissed as stark raving mad.

1) Create a community currency.

Our economic mechanism- money- has become a systemic problem. Bernard Lietaer and Jacqui Dunne offer incredible insight and explore its drawbacks in their book (on alternative currencies and new solutions) titled, *Rethinking Money*. As people, we focus on accruing wealth through money and have lost sight of long-term goals, environmental impact, human capital, and the fabric and value of social capital. Not only can community currencies work, thousands in operation have transformed local economies around the world and ventured far beyond any necessary proof-of-concept for those leaders who are more risk-adverse. Buying local matters, so create a closed-loop economic system.

The objective of every cooperative currency is: *pairing unmet needs with underutilized resources*. These two factors exist everywhere. They can be leveraged to create change, improving communities. Alternative currencies can be the fastest, most effective method to accelerate revitalization and economic success, with the lowest financial burden.

2) Social services do not equate to social justice.

As a leading nation, one of America's biggest failings is in regards to social justice and welfare programs. Although one of the largest categories in the federal budget (over $1.3 TRILLION annually); solving poverty, homelessness, and other economically-disadvantaged people living in hardship have largely been failing efforts. Lyndon B Johnson tried his "War on Poverty" campaign. Former San Francisco Mayor, Gavin Newsom, tried his "Care Not Cash" program. Mega-nonprofit, United Way, claims they will reduce poverty by 50% in the San Francisco Bay Area by 2020. (Whether they even fractionally succeed or completely fail, CEO Anne Wilson still receives $457,873 and the top-nine executives continue to draw a total of $2 million in compensation). Central City Association formulated their "2020 Vision" plan to eradicate Skid Row in Los Angeles. Fresno's Economic Opportunities Commission is one of the nation's largest publicly-funded nonprofits and tasked with helping the impoverished in California's Central Valley. Fresno EOC received $107 million in 2014, employed 1,300; yet Fresno continues to suffer an extreme lack of education, extreme lack of work opportunities, and is "A city with the highest concentration of urban poverty anywhere in the nation," according to the former Fresno Bee reporter, George Hostetter, expert on city policy and politics.

The President of Ford Foundation, Darren Walker, speaks out against the systemic flaws of opportunism and incumbency:

> Short-termism is a challenge for our culture writ large. And it certainly manifests in the markets in ways that distort the behaviors of corporate leaders, of corporations and business in general. Short-termism favors incumbents. It favors those who are already privileged and it compounds that privilege.

The antiquated systems of welfare need new solutions. What measurables and procedures of accountability exist? How can we do better? What would leading business innovators and visionaries do if they were to re-create social services systems today? I believe solutions are all around us. All we need is to apply cross-platform solutions. Blend entrepreneurialism with social ventures with education/training with job creation with funding.

The fastest-growing market for the next 15 years will be social business ventures. New organizations will apply innovative for-profit business methods to enhance social & environmental justice while gaining self-sufficiency; requiring only a one-time funding investment for initial startup, job creation, capital equipment, and operating expenses. Impact investing extends beyond venture capital.

Eliminate the "job counselors" who are paid a good salary to do nothing more than search Craigslist job postings for welfare recipients. We do not need thousands of social workers paid to help build résumés; still relying upon existing, external businesses to employ those most impoverished. The California justice system and the many social service agencies cannot keep track of people appointed to them. So, a software development company, Shift3, is paid to build a new software application that supposedly "connects" and "tracks" clients better. Because the mechanisms and bureaucratic systems are so confusing and so poorly executed, additional social service funding is now being diverted to affluent software coders? Other common solutions include creating more committees and research studies and every type of 'counselor' imaginable- paying thousands of intermediaries while the poor stay poor. Makes no sense at all.

Why not create the *actual* jobs using that same funding, help revitalize blighted buildings, introduce new community benefits, and offer affordable products and services? Teach people, and have them experience better practices and better outcomes through diligence. These social ventures can generate revenue and become self-sufficient, so funding can perpetually solve more problems, help more people, and go towards other important causes like infrastructure and education. These jobs can divert tons of material from landfill and offer community improvements. One of the most undermining assumptions is that impoverished and disadvantaged people are not capable- that officials must direct them in how to live better. I've termed this *the assumption of the negative*. Let's create the training and housing and economic opportunities, and remove the condescension.

3) America is losing its skilled workforce.

Generational outsourcing and offshore manufacturing have led to millions of lost jobs, a less-skilled workforce, and a lack of advanced educational attainment. Even during a period of outrageous economic success, poverty rates have risen in many regions. Corruption in education continues to be a problem, educational institutions are losing accreditations. College tuition rates rise faster than income levels or inflation. In *Rethinking Money*, the solution of "saber credits" offers not only a community-based system for earning college tuition, it adds an important "multiplier" that ensures its success. Brilliant. In Curitiba (the capital of the southeastern state of Paraná, Brazil), a cooperative currency didn't just revitalize impoverished favelas, it completely transformed the city and earned the United Nations Environmental Program's highest environmental recognition, the Globe Sustainable City Award, in 2010.

Our aging population base can help mentor, teach, and contribute. One of the foremost experts on aging, Dr. Ken Dychtwald, founded Age Wave and has written many insightful books including, *With Purpose*. He explains how those who've experienced *middlescence* still wish to contribute after they retire, and money is not a primary objective. Rather than planning for a massive financial crisis as a significant portion of our collective wealth is withdrawn as retirement income, we can generate ways for these elders to share their collective knowledge.

4) Hope comes from economic opportunity = JOBS.

We need to create more jobs. The impoverished are constantly oppressed by the welfare system. The more vulnerable, the more they are taken advantage of. Welfare recipients that work are the only socio-economic group that can face a 75% income tax- all the while still living in poverty. Consider San Francisco's largest publicly-funded nonprofit, Tenderloin Housing Clinic, that receives $91 million (on a five-year grant cycle) to employ 240 full-time employees and house 2,000 impoverished in 15 subsidized low-income SRO hotels. Their contract specifies they must retain 95% occupancy, which is justified as fighting against recidivism. However, it also ensures they won't help residents improve their lives; if clients were to move out to independent housing, THC would lose their funding. This structure of competing interests does not produce anything good or worthwhile.

There are ways to not only create jobs, but create *better* jobs for those disadvantaged. I have unique expertise and specific solutions to help do this.

Every person earning welfare is a complete net-loss to society. This isn't a judgment of character or ability, it is *economic fact*. Imagine any who *can* be employed, should be. President Obama's job stimulus package has had an average cost of roughly $278,000 per job created. Other city, state, and federal programs vary from roughly $250,000 to $550,000 costs per job created. According to American Enterprise Institute, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act created up to 1.5 million jobs at a cost of $554,000 per job created for a total cost of $831 billion. Watchdog.org reported New York Mayor Cuomo's "Start-Up NY" program cost $368,000 per job created for just 76 jobs at a cost of $28 million.

Each welfare recipient getting $800 per month in income can easily cost over $5,000 per month in *total funding costs* once we include: subsidized housing, food stamps, health care, social services, nonprofits, NGOs, and many other categories of support.

However, this does *not* equate to Cato Institute's claim that "an average welfare recipient makes twice the minimum wage." The majority of funding gets divided up among many groups, many that do not work together- even though they overlap mission statements and objectives. San Francisco spends a quarter of a BILLION dollars addressing homelessness and related matters. Meanwhile, the number of people receiving Social Security Disability benefits increased 22% between December 2007 and April 2012. And they live in poverty, while ineffective social workers continue to get applauded *and* compensated.

Money can be spent more productively, actually helping many of those disadvantaged.

Jobs can be created to address multiple issues at once. We do not need to justify a business investment on real estate terms, where a break-even point should be reached within six to eight years. We are turning a net-loss into a tax-paying worker; possibly reducing blight, crime, subsidized health care expenses, *all the while* improving a poor community. These jobs created can revitalize blighted buildings, add economic engines, add tax revenues, add green space or urban farms, improve educational programs, and increase arts and culture.

Jobs can easily be created with a budget of three years of welfare spending per individual (estimated at $60K/year x 3 years = $180K). This ripples to solve multiple regional problems and these jobs are revenue engines that can become self-sufficient within three years- not requiring further funding. Again, that funding- plus new tax revenues- can go towards other important causes like infrastructure, public safety, city improvements, education, or affordable housing. That is a lot more productive than simply perpetuating a net-loss spending cycle, on ineffective temporary solutions to permanent problems.

Further, documented studies can be written by those integrated into work- and those employing and administrating them. Case studies could be shared through cloud-based collaboration, making projects leaner and ever-more effective. The reason most nonprofits do not collaborate is because they wish to retain funding. Perpetuating their own salaries becomes their primary objective over addressing any mission statement. They must prove their services are needed. It is a severely flawed system.

5) Civil unrest cannot be solved simply with more policing.

Social justice should not focus on supplying free meals or blankets or emergency shelters, it should be based upon offering long-term solutions. The reason many feel upset with aspects of public policy and recent police actions is because they experience little hope and/or economic opportunity. They feel those in positions of power are not held accountable to the same standards as the rest of society. They feel that equality does not include them.

The impoverished use words like "gentrification" and "entitlement" to identify those who "have" versus themselves who "have not." The poor experience the world differently and often feel criminalized. The death of a person like Alex Nieto (in San Francisco) resonates and angers entire communities. People feel disenchanted and disheartened by policies that come from those who have no knowledge of the hardships they actually face. If you do not personally experience the injustices perpetrated on those most vulnerable, you likely wouldn't believe that practices just like those reported in Stanford University's shocking 1971 psychological study of prisoners versus guards still exist everywhere today.

Many studies show the negative effects of poverty. Catholic Charities of Chicago and the U.S. DOJ report double the rates of violent crime among economically-poor neighborhoods. Dr. Elizabeth Hinton, Harvard Professor, Ford Foundation Fellow, and author of *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*, describes how we need "maximum feasible participation," have failing public schools, face mass unemployment, need to undue the criminalization of our social welfare programs, and are in dire need of job creation programs.

Professor Yvonne Kelly from the University College London and the London School of Economics reported how obesity relates to poor children. The poorest kids (among 20,000 families, measuring children between ages 5-11) in Britain are three-times more likely to be fat, which links to heightened rates of Type-2 diabetes, heart disease, and even cancer later in life. In Alabama, the poverty rate among white populations can average 8.8 percent, while the much larger black populations average 50.2 percent. Public Policy Institute of California identifies poverty rates for adults age 25-64 with college degrees at 8.5%, compared to 38.2% for those without high school diplomas. PPIC also reports that (from 2011-2013) 78% of impoverished Californians lived in families with at least one adult working, 53.8% included at least one family member working full-time, another 24.2% with at least one family member working part-time. The point is, many are trying their best and already working hard to try to improve their own lives.

Gary Hamel, author of *Leading the Revolution*, is a foremost expert on business innovation and leadership, but his words apply with equal clarity for a cultural revolution:

> ... Challenge the very foundations of what others regard as axiomatic... Let's start with the facts. Big complicated social systems don't get changed from the top-- not unless they're already on the verge of collapse... Most social systems get changed by activists not by the elite... Most folks stand for nothing more than more of the same... Learn to see different, learn to be different, and you will discover the different... Your manifesto must challenge people to look the future in the eye, however disconcerting it may appear. It must deal forthrightly with the little lies that people tell themselves to avoid the discomfort of change.

We can improve civic relations and police perception by [creating economic opportunities and investing in human capital](). Jobs create income, income instills hope, income reduces poverty, which reduces crime, which improves long-term health; all of which reduces the financial burden of welfare on all taxpayers. All this is possible by simply re-allocating monies from temporary solutions into more long-term solutions. Let's discuss how this can happen and how I can help you achieve this.

6) Our current methods are madness.

[Tom Kelley](), author of *The Art of Innovation* and co-founder of [creative firm, IDEO]() (along with his brother David), states "My brother David hates rules. He hates them because he knows that when you start making rules, you sow the first seeds of bureaucracy."

Expecting any fledging entrepreneur to become a formative expert on attracting a top-level board of directors is illogical, to obtain funding. This is pure ego for prospective investors. NAICS codes aren't a reasonable method to determine viability or valuation for many business ventures. Having to jump through hoops, learn, and create a stunning PowerPoint pitch deck does not correlate to the ability to properly operate a proposed business. These business practices, of vetting, ensure those in power remain in power. Rather, why not create an entire network of capable individuals to help offer support to *multiple* startups?

This isn't a likeness of agencies like SBA, SBDC, or SCORE. Those are people who claim to be experts and mostly impose their views on entrepreneurs. But there are thriving and inspirational business incubator programs like the [National Business Incubation Association (NBIA)](); [Startup City in Lisbon](), Portugal; and the [Global Shapers Initiative]() in Medéllin, Columbia. Inspiration can be drawn from programs like [Our School at Blair Grocery]() (working to revitalize the Lower Ninth Ward in New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina), [LURN in Los Angeles](), and how [the city of Sabae in Japan]() revitalized away from core agricultural businesses. Let's review [how Atlanta has revitalized](), [with more info here]().

Meanwhile, a highly respected expert [on nonprofits and foundations, Jan Masaoka](), founder of blueavocado.org, refers to CompassPoint's Daring to Lead 2011 nationwide survey: [45% of nonprofit executives do not have annual reviews](), 42% of board members admit to some confusion or lack of understanding financial analysis, 39% of board members have no participation in strategic decisions. Does any of this seem like a highly operative leadership framework, ready to tackle some of society's toughest problems?

Imagine eight people seeking an average of $50,000 in grant funding to start new businesses; everything from a CPA to graphic artist to photographer to attorney to restaurateur. Require each to attend an incubator workshop series, then help contribute their service to five other startups before they can receive funding. Now, they also must help mentor and/or hire two people living in poverty, hardship, or with disadvantages. You've trained people for real jobs, created real jobs and business networks, critically pre-tested business ventures, and integrated disadvantaged people into the workforce. We reduce welfare spending while helping to meet specific community needs. *Matching underutilized resources with unmet needs.* Is $400,000 available to fund such a thing? Let's scale this to do more, affect more, create more. Let's do it.

6) Climate change is real.

This is an excerpt from visionary, author, model entrepreneur, and environmentalist, Paul Hawken, from his book, *The Next Economy*, published back in 1983:

> No matter how Puritan we may have been when we entered the era of mass production, the onslaught of goods wore away at the work ethic and eventually produced an accompanying ethic of consumption. We became, unwittingly perhaps, an exploitative society because at the heart of the mass economy is the wholesale extraction of fossil fuels, minerals, timber, and other resources. The dominant means of amassing wealth and power in the mass economy was the exploitation of natural resources, because it was in their transformation that the great profits of industry were to be found.

Paul Hawken expands on his premise in his 1999 book, *Natural Capitalism*:

> Capitalism, as practiced, is a financially profitable, non-sustainable aberration in human development... Following Einstein's dictum that problems can't be solved within the mind-set that created them... In the standard industrial model, the creation of value is portrayed as a linear sequence of extraction, production, and distribution: Raw materials are introduced. (Enter nature, stage left.) Labor uses technologies to transform these resources into products, which are sold to create profits. The wastes from production processes, and soon the products themselves, are somehow disposed of somewhere else. (Exit waste, stage right.) The "somewheres" in this scenario are not the concern of classical economics: Enough money can buy enough resources, so the theory goes, and enough "elsewheres" to dispose of them afterward... [The] planet is not growing, so the somewheres and elsewheres are always with us.

We have the available resources, know-how, workforce, and funding. If we aren't being ignorant, we recognize the challenges we must face- difficult topics like climate change. In *Renewable*, Jeremy Shere recounts multiple historic turning points away from renewable energies. All share a common theme- petroleum prices dropped and/or coal is always cheaper than eco-friendly alternatives.

What if our primary focus were anything other than profits?

Crazy, right? Gary Hamel writes, "*Familiarity is the enemy*... There is much that individuals cannot imagine simply because they are prisoners of their own dogma." Economist John Maynard Keynes asserted, "The difficulty lies not so much in developing new ideas as in escaping from the old ones." Let's assume a break-even point and pivot towards doing good.

What about saving our planet so that 50 years from now all shellfish won't be extinct or 80 years from now our most populous cities aren't under four feet of water?

If we focus solely on reducing freight/shipping distances, we can solve this problem with more regional manufacturing. Forego all the triple-shipping, paying all the shipping agents, all the customs taxes, all the long delays; put the money back into the goods themselves, invest in the American workforce, and help save our planet. If we do not have fifteen executives withdrawing disproportionate salaries, we can manufacture and install more

affordable solar panel arrays. If we divert materials from landfill, we can re-purpose supplies into new and beautiful things.

Basically, *if profits aren't the target*, we can pivot and accomplish anything!

Cooperative currencies could improve communities. Welfare funding could transition into job creation and [affordable housing](). Revitalization funding could initiate environmental programs. Our youth could have valuable educational/vocational training programs and job opportunities. Our aging population could consult on advanced topics like law, payroll, engineering, sourcing, manufacturing, distribution channels, and marketing. Innovative solutions are everywhere; for example, Pier 1 re-purposed tens of thousands of coconut half-shells (used to serve ice cream during a soccer World Cup) into scented candles. Awesome.

7) Revitalizing communities.

Revitalizing our most blighted properties and impoverished communities can be done. First, we need to stop criminalizing the poor or considering them less than equals. Then, we can get to work. [Steve Farber]() provides a stirring pronouncement in his book on extreme leadership, *The Radical Leap*:

> Love is the ultimate motivation of the Extreme Leader: love of something or someone; love of a cause; love of a principle; love of the people you work with and the customers you serve; love of the future you and yours can create together; love of the business you conduct together every day.

> *Think about it...*

> Without the calling and commitment of your heart, there's no good reason for you to take a stand, to take a risk, to do what it takes to change the world for the better.

We are a product of our environment, and therefore I work hard to surround myself with constant inspiration, culture, research, and informative materials. There is no doubt one can feel a stronger sense of self-worth, opportunity, and productivity while dining in an Ivy League cafeteria compared to a soup kitchen in Compton, Camden, East St. Louis, or Detroit. There's a reason why [the hottest businesses all have]() spectacular cafeterias and campus-like worksites. Let's work to build better, more empowering communities everywhere.

In one of my favorite books, [*Consilience*, Edward O. Wilson]() explains how vital informed imagination is to achieve advancement:

> Nothing in science -- nothing in life, for that matter -- makes sense without theory... Still, scientific theories are a product of imagination -- *informed* imagination. They reach beyond their grasp to predict the existence of previously unsuspected phenomena. They generate hypotheses, disciplined guesses about unexplored topics whose parameters the theories help define. The best theories generate the most fruitful hypotheses, which translate cleanly into questions that can be answered by observation and experiment.

Experimentation requires a worldview that allows for change, that understands problems exist, that recognizes available resources. All we need to do is better connect them. The risk

of not trying is *the status quo*. Dr. Dychtwald eloquently describes this transformative process as, "Going from success to significance." Success is often measured in monetary gain, but our *significance* has a far-reaching impact. We can transform our communities. My high school yearbook quote, from Sir Winston Churchill, still sums up my ambition in life: "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

If we identify key properties in blighted neighborhoods and develop them into thriving destinations, we can thereby increase the value of neighboring properties. Utilizing everything from re-purposed building materials to community residents to business incubator programs, create a market force that eliminates disinvestment by landlords. Make their property so valuable that they will *desire* to renovate their buildings and open their doors once again. Anybody who has ever traveled to Manhattan can surely explain why there is a preponderance of scaffolding on nearly every city block. Every single property is supremely valuable; therefore, landlords invest into them. Malcolm Gladwell explains this as "The Broken Window Syndrome" in his best-selling book, *The Tipping Point*.

8) Let's stop saying, "No" and start asking, "How?"

As a society, we tend to believe some problems cannot be easily solved. Ironically, many of the leaders who dismiss new solutions are the ones who define what is considered possible.

My primary objective isn't necessarily to run one business, it is to help optimize opportunities for MANY businesses and social ventures. What I offer is a combination of macro and micro strategies for many applicable solutions. I want to create social justice for all, revitalize communities, establish infrastructure, and improve economic opportunities.

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If you've read this far, *thank you*.

My Story.

Nearly six years ago, I suffered a severe and traumatic medical issue in which I lost everything I owned, and was left homeless, de-humanized, and destitute. I once was a professional athlete, and formulated my own coaching techniques while working alongside Hall of Fame and Olympic coaches; and now my body fails me as I deal with some physical restrictions. I live a persistently isolated life, on $800 of Social Security Disability income per month, with barely $250 to live on after I pay my rent and electricity.

It took me a long time to save up, own a laptop, and move out of deplorable subsidized housing. Another three months before I could afford a mattress. I recently worked with a prominent business incubator program, but my net income was 18% after my work-related expenses, income tax, and welfare deductions. I've literally spent THOUSANDS of hours trying to find work, once I did my PASS (Plan to Attain Self-Sufficiency) application was denied, and my appeal to retain $460 in work-related expenses denied. I receive virtually none of my earnings. There is seemingly no way out of welfare available to me.

I believe that I am uniquely capable, but I am also desperate. I seek a way to gain help by helping create social and environmental justice with others. If you ask what qualifications I have, I can be honest and self-deprecating by saying, "none." But, clearly, that isn't my whole story. I've spent my entire lifetime learning to identify problems, being creative, and solving problems creatively. I've worked with some elite companies. I had previously accomplished my dreams.

My mind makes community benefits comparisons from the [$350 million Millennium Tower](#) development in San Francisco to Tesla's Gigafactory to Twitter to how Calvin Klein launched his CK Khakis product line. I've learned how [Delancey Street Foundation](#) is completely self-sufficient while offering supportive housing *and* jobs to those in hardship. I've surrounded myself with industry leaders to learn what it takes to be a professional, how to inspire, how to lead, and about business operations in a diverse set of markets. Macro and micro.

I've also come to learn, first-hand, how prejudice and negative pre-judgment operates. I've spent countless hours meeting with leaders, applying for jobs, discussing opportunities. I can only imagine that perception of my situation basically *criminalizes* me, however unjust and inaccurate this is. I have lost everything, through no action or doing of my own. Why must I constantly defend myself against things I am not? I only want to work, contribute, pursue my passions, be a voice for those that cannot or do not speak up for themselves.

Social justice for all.

I know that I keep trying. The silent injustices I've suffered exhaustively from will likely never be explained. But if I have *any* chance to help keep others from similar fates, if I can help improve the world in some way; I still keep fighting, I still keep trying. I hold a unique distinction of knowing both sides of this battle. I've suffered through extreme poverty and hardship, dealt with many social service agencies, and have also worked with many community leaders, nonprofits, NGOs, and community groups. I can help bridge the divide.

Better solutions are available all around us, we simply need to listen, learn, and apply them.

What resources and what unmet needs does a specific community have? Let's explore some real-world solutions...

Let's consider Baton Rouge and the surrounding parishes.

More than 60,000 homes and businesses will require some furnishings. I do not mean to seem insensitive, that is a unique opportunity that can help them revitalize. Just imagine opening a factory that diverts the water-damaged wood material from landfill, employs 300 locals, and supplies their future needs. Not only could it fund itself, it could be a new revenue engine for Louisiana's capital moving forward. If 50,000 customers plan to spend $800 on furniture, that is $40 million. Make it all locally instead of supporting the Targets and Ikeas, where expenditures leave the localized economy forever.

Any city or region that has a high poverty rate has underutilized human capital. Identify what other resources are available, and create jobs. It doesn't matter what kind of jobs. [Rubicon Bakery in Richmond, CA](#) employs formerly incarcerated and make cheesecakes that

sell in Whole Foods. [Elmwood Cafe](#) attracted top talent away from Alice Waters' Cafe Fanny and opened in 2010 as a social enterprise that [donates 50% of all profits](#).

Renovate a blighted building into a massive community space.

Personally, my dream would be to help [transform a large, blighted building](#) into a thriving community nexus. Imagine a large café with social meeting space and conference rooms. [Meetup.com recorded their 100 *millionth* event RSVP](#) in 2013, so clearly people need places to meet up. Imagine the kitchen is separated, with outside access. Offer cooking workshops, [collaborate with local high schools](#), allow local residents an opportunity for supplemental income. Come [use the commercial kitchen](#) to make, prep, cook, or bake things we can sell. Start a catering business; test a menu for a food truck startup; attract the [go-getters who have cottage licenses](#) and are looking to scale their home businesses to create wholesale goods for restaurants, cafés, bars or farmers markets. We have tv shows proving how highly capable home cooks can be- without formal training in culinary arts. There are countless resources available for anyone wanting to learn how to cook or bake spectacularly. Having an amazing family recipe does not require one be able to recite the five French mother sauces or know how to de-bone a chicken or master a perfect soufflé.

This could easily create 50 or 60 jobs for disadvantaged individuals. More, if it were placed in the Golden State Warriors' proposed Chase Arena in San Francisco. In Fresno (the city ranks worst-in-the-nation in green space with 1.02 acres per 1,000 residents), it could include a beautiful indoor garden, [with vertical living walls](#). This business model creates multiple revenue streams and can become self-sufficient in less than three years. It offers community benefits, employs those living in hardship, and becomes a focal point for revitalizing an entire community. Let's discuss funding requirements, specifics, and P&Ls.

A service bureau to revitalize a city.

Consider Toronto's example of what opened as The Branding Factory but is now known as [The Artisan Factory](#). They converted an old 80,000 square-foot factory into creative workspaces and artist studios. Imagine one building where prospective entrepreneurs could walk inside and get every service they needed under one roof. Obtain business formation papers; get a logo designed; get signage, menus, and business cards printed; consult with attorneys and payroll experts; get photos and videos made; get a web domain registered and hosted; get their website designed; meet with an advertising agency; even meet with architects and interior designers. Think of Reading Terminal Market, but for professional, entrepreneurial, and creative services instead of food.

What does this service bureau have to do with social justice? Imagine using funds to revitalize a blighted building. Entice businesses to join by offering financial incentives- if they hire apprentices or employees from disadvantaged situations. [Urban Solutions in San Francisco](#) claim to have helped over 6,000 small businesses in poor neighborhoods or with economically-distressed owners. But they mostly offer simple loan packaging and low-level consultancy. Imagine how much *more* this service bureau could offer. Imagine those eight

people I previously mentioned seeking funding to start new businesses joining this huge network of connected businesses. Help support and position new businesses to succeed.

Imagine the possibilities.

I envision a massive new industry. Vertical urban farms that [employ wheelchair-bound veterans](#) and other disabled persons. Considering the reduced weight of plants, due to miniscule soil and water demands; design the planter beds on vertical, motorized racks that allow work at wheelchair height. If funding is available [from agriculture](#), [veteran benefits](#), job creation, and even [research](#); without the need to recover tens of millions in factory investment costs... How much easier is it to monetize crops within urban areas? *Much easier*. How about collaborating with [Ecopia Farms in San Francisco](#), who supply celebrity chefs like Michael Mina and Charles Phan; or [Green Sense Farms](#) in Chicago.

Save tons of pounds of carbon emissions from both growing and transportation. Allow fresh, healthy foods to get to market faster. Grow crops that are specific, regional needs. Produce has more shelf time, which can reduce spoilage and waste. Water reductions help the entire ecosystem and counterbalance our already burdened water needs. Controlled indoor environments can reduce [pest and crop losses](#). Studies have shown that many [veterans match well with agriculture](#). It provides a strong sense of productivity and a renewed sense of pride in doing something for the common good.

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For a long time, I've pondered this chicken-egg conundrum: Does Nike always make the coolest shoes, or does footwear become cool simply because Nike makes it? I feel that I am capable of a great many things, but if every leader, influential person, decision-maker, and qualified expert deems I am nothing and ignores me, does that define what I am capable of as nothing? A failure? Am I still truly "capable"? Or would this, by its very proof and definition, determine that I am not capable and that I suffer from an unsubstantiated sense of self-worth? It's been a very long journey for me. I only wish to help.

I recognize the extreme challenges I face. Being an innovative thinker *exactly* defines me as one who is not readily understood nor accepted. If you feel any or all of my assertions are outrageous, unrealistic, or naive; *please challenge me*. Get me to prove that I can help do that which I set forth. Correct me, explain to me how we can better solve things. I am always learning, and welcome any dialogue. I want an opportunity to work with you.

I hope to hear from you. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

David Pan

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